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FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF

PROGRAM	INSIDE IRAN	STATION	WTTW TV
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INSIDE IRAN

NARRATOR: Religion in Iran has always been a passionate, pervasive force. The blood of these devotees is real. They are scourging themselves in honor of the saint who was killed 1300 years ago fighting against impossible odds. That's how much of Iran feels about the outside world today. And so Iran has turned its back on the outside world. Most journalists have been expelled. Only a handful are let in. So this is a rare glimpse at what has been happening inside Iran one year after the release and two years after the capture of the American hostages.

Almost forgotten about, the war drags on between Iran and Iraq. We believe this is the first film of the Iranian partisans, who operate behind the Iraqi front lines. Despite the uniforms, they're not professional soldiers. They hate and mistrust the remnants of the Shah's regular army. In Iran, their suicidal courage has become a legend. Their casualties have been heavy. In Iran today, there's a cult of death and suffering. This music was composed to inspire soldiers with a longing for martyrdom. The partisans believe utterly in Khomeini's Islam. They're glad to die for him. These flags mark where a hero of the partisans fell. Khomeini's Defense Minister Mustaffa Shamran, was apparently hit by Iraqi mortar fire. Many partisans blame the regular army for his death. They say the army knew he would be exposed to enemy fire, but chose not to warn him. This is the Minister's wife, identifying his corpse. He was just one of the 15,000 Iranians who have perished in the war.

In Tehran, the Khomeini government won't talk peace while Iraq occupies Iranian territory. But meanwhile, the war keeps the regular army too busy to plot a coup. And above all, the war gives the mullahs breathing space to press ahead with the revolution at home.

The government has declared that no one is too young to be arrested. Hundreds of school children have been jailed, and 77,000 expelled for

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political reasons. Islamic censors search books for un-Islamic thoughts. Any mention of dancing, drink or gambling has to be removed. For women, wearing the shador is practically compulsory. Few still dress like this one. Designer jeans and high heels may arouse the wrath of the zealots. Zealots like these: the so-called "Party of God". Armed with clubs and knives, they impose their idea of conformity. They tell women, "Choose the veil, or a beating up." And many have been.

Khomeini has rejected the Western notion of economic progress, so Tehran is dotted with buildings that will never be completed: offices, hotels and apartments. At least 3,000 of those who oppose Khomeini have been executed in the last few months because Khomeini and his followers believe that anyone who opposes them is opposing the will of God.

ALI-AKBAR RAFSANJAN, SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT: For those who make war on us, there is severe treatment. Sixteen million people voted for Ayatollah Khomeini. This shows the people are satisfied.

NARRATOR: But despite the government's severity, opposition to the regime is growing. Here the people bury their President, burned to death in a fire bomb attack. In the last six months, a party called the Mojahedin has assassinated some 500 government officials. To the Mojahedin leaders in exile in Paris, violence is morally justified.

MASSOUD RAJAVI, MOJAHEDIN LEADER: This is a very legitimate answer to the regime, which does not understand any language except the language of power. And you know that you cannot condemn all the resistant...legitimate resistance all over the world. When somewhere fascism is settling, what can you do?

NARRATOR: Fascist or not, the mullahs are Iran's new elite. On Friday, the day of prayer, you can see them arriving at the mosques in their requisitioned limousines with an escort of armed guards close behind. Despite all the turmoil, many are still loyal to the banner of Islam. Men like these are prepared to sacrifice everything for Khomeini.

The leaders of the religious party promise justice. Two years of suffering have not destroyed the faith of Iran's poor. And it's the poor who remain the bedrock of the Ayatollah's support. The first thing these refugees set up when they reached Tehran from the war zone was a tented mosque. They still believe in Khomeini despite their suffering.

The crowded market of south Tehran is another area of hardcore support for Khomeini and his government. Hundreds of people from lower, middle class areas like this one died fighting against the Shah. And they have done well under the revolution. Since the

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Shah's plans to industrialize Iran have been scrapped, the peasant economy has boomed. This man makes traditional wooden scaffolding. Western technology might have put him out of business. So people here stay loyal to Khomeini and willingly lay down their lives in his cause.

Nine weeks ago, Mr. Akmund's son was killed in the war against Iraq.

TRANSLATOR: He is not angry; he is very happy. I am happy because of Islam. This is our religion, our way. I would send my other son to the war. I would go myself.

NARRATOR: Before he died, Mr. Akmund's son used to record passages from the Koran. He sent them home from the front lines where he fought with one of the partisans' brigades. Mrs. Akmund likes to listen to her dead son's voice when the family is together. This recording is all they have to remember him by. There is no grave to mourn beside; his body has never been found.

When Mrs. Akmund leaves home to go shopping, she steps into a world that has been transformed by the revolution. The power of the mosques and the mullahs is being rapidly extended to almost every aspect of life. Even rations and food supplies are now controlled by her local mosque, the Abul Fazal. Like most of Iran's 80,000 mosques, it may not look impressive, but its power is growing.

The mosques that were once centers of opposition to the Shah, have now become centers of control. The mosques control information. Most newspapers are now banned. Since 60% of Iranians are illiterate anyway, the only source of political and religious news is the Mullah.

The religious leadership has a monopoly on information and its interpretation.

NASROLLAH POURJAVADI, CULTURE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL: Whether people are illiterate or not illiterate, that's not so important. The important thing is that they are happy. They keep their relationship with God. They keep their relationship with the message of Islam. And they learn, they are educated through other medias, not necessarily through books. And that is just as important for us as people who are being educated through books.

NARRATOR: The mosques control culture. Only plays with a religious message are considered suitable entertainment. In this play, the audience sees an Islamic martyr persecuted by a wicked caliph. Before the evening is over, the caliph hangs the martyr. In today's Tehran, martyrdom is a story with a happy ending.

The mosques are now in charge of ration coupons. Without coupons, food and fuel are much more expensive. And with unemployment at 33%, registering is essential to avoid paying black market prices.

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The mosques control banking. Since western style banks have closed, the traditional interest-free loans given by the mosque have become more significant. To get a loan, a man must be a good Muslim. The Abul Fazal mosque records the name of everyone who signs on for a loan or a ration book. Personal and family details are noted. And mosques exchange this information with each other. It's a unique and pervasive security system. There's little a person can do without the local mosque hearing about it.

The mosques control security. Only 50 yards from the Abul Fazal mosque, his gun at the ready, its safety catch off, a young revolutionary guard patrols the roof of Khometa 12. If the mosques are the eyes and ears of the revolution, the khometas are its guardian angels and avengers. Three hundred thousand people in south Tehran are policed by these young men. They're all local boys and know the area well. They work closely with the local mosque. The local mullah is their commander. If the mullah suspects anyone, the guards go out to investigate.

From across the border, Russia is helping Iran. These Soviet trucks are loaded with food and basic supplies. Some Iranian politicians have claimed that large numbers of Russian advisors have also been entering the country. The Soviets cannot provide the hard foreign currency, or the sophisticated western spare parts Iran needs so badly for its war effort. But they do have their own areas of special expertise.

Shortly before Christmas, a party of 34 KGB men checked into the almost deserted Tehran Hilton. The men from Moscow found a Hilton without Muzak because Khomeini has banned all pop music, and a bar that serves nothing but tea and soft drinks. They had come here to advise the government on internal security. The gates of the U.S Embassy still attract demonstrations. This one, held on the anniversary of the taking of the American hostages, shows why the government may need help from the KGB. Only 20,000 school children showed up. Nevertheless, the organizers of the march claimed a turnout of 200,000 people.

In Iran, crowds are the barometer of the revolution. Size is seen as proof of popularity. By that criterion, the government of Iran's popularity is diminishing. But Khomeini's revolutionary guards insure that it will take more than mere unpopularity to topple this government. Through its network of mosques, Khomeini's government can watch the people and the guns of the revolutionary guards can impose the government's will on the population. It's a system that's been tested to the limit in the last few months, and has been strong enough to survive. The greatest challenge to the Khomeini regime has come from the Mojahedin. The handclap is the symbol of a party which espouses both progressive Islam and Marxism. Late last summer, as Khomeini's crowds were dwindling, the Mojahedin could call half a million supporters onto the streets. Startled by the size of the demonstrations, the government gave orders to open fire. Twenty-three demonstrators died. The dead were typical Mojahedin supporters: young, educated and middle class. One hundred twenty who had been arrested were lined up and shot. The youngest was only 17.

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Then the Mojahedin struck back. Their tactics were those of the terrorist. Hundreds died during their campaign of bombing, arson and murder. Much of the violence appeared to be random. This explosion wasn't. It killed the second-most important man in Iran: the Ayatollah Baheshti. Seventy-two other legislators and party members died with him. The government ordered the revolutionary guard to search out the Mojahedin and destroy them. One by one, the Mojahedin safehouses, where they stored their arms, ammunition and bombs, were surrounded and attacked. The Mojahedin fought back and then retreated. The Mojahedin had mistimed their insurrection. Many would not join them so long as the war with Iraq went on. The street fighting this fall was vicious. Anyone seen with a gun or helping an armed man was shot on the spot.

It is said that in this hospital that a doctor was executed, with his wife, daughter and son, for treating a Mojahedin. The only compassion allowed is for Khomeini's fighters. Eight Mojahedin gunmen who were brought here, were dragged from their beds, even off operating tables to be shot.

Many of the captured Mojahedin end up here, in the notorious Evein Prison (?). It was built under the Shah, with torture cells deep in the hills. Today, this is the main center for the trial and execution of the Ayatollah's enemies. Still photographs and a small sound cassette of one of these trials have been smuggled from the prison and out of Iran. Three young women are brought to the court to witness the fate of three of their male colleagues; a complete Mojahedin cell. Before the trial begins, one of the women admits planning assassinations and regrets her failure to carry them out. Then she says she has been beaten. She says they beat her on the feet with a wire cable. The Prosecutor General of Tehran replies that beating on the feet isn't torture; it purifies and sanctifies women. The beating of the feet, one of the most sensitive parts of the body, is a traditional punishment in Iran. These pictures were taken secretly of another prisoner in Evein. The girl who just spoke is quickly taken out of the courtroom. She hasn't been heard of since.

The trial begins. Galani, the chief judge in Tehran, has a reputation for harshness. In the government controlled press, he said, Islam permits all those taking part in armed demonstration in the street to be put up against a wall and shot there and then. In other words, summary execution. Now, in court, the accused: Massout Massazadeh, age twenty, Darias Salucha, nineteen, leader of the guerrilla cell, and Nassar Jaffary, eighteen. Above their heads, a grim reminder of Ayatollah Baheshti, assassinated, the government claims, by the Mojahedin.

The group is charged with shooting at revolutionary guards, throwing molotov cocktails at government supporters and stealing cars for terrorist purposes. They are corrupt on earth, the court claims, and are waging war on God.

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One possible way of escaping execution is to repent, and Islamic experts are in the courtroom to test the sincerity of any prisoner who does. But Darias, the leader, is not willing to repent. He says he took up arms because "the Khomeini regime is oppressing all freedom and undermining the aims of the revolution". The accused must defend themselves. But there is no defense, only defiance. The Shah, says Darias, was filthier than the judges. But at least he used to give life sentences to armed opponents. There is no compromise between the court and the young prisoner.

Now Judge Galani asks Darias if he knows what the penalty is for those who won't repent. "Execution."

Massout repents with tears in his eyes. He admits that he fought against the government and deserves the death penalty.

The trial is over. It took two and a half hours. The judge suggests their lives will be spared if they truly repent, but the boys know that this leniency is only because foreign journalists are present. In fact, the three boys were executed within a few days.

Prisoners are allowed one last letter or phone call. This is one from (Inaudible), executed on November eleventh. She wrote to her mother, "Don't shed any tears for me. I wish I could tell you of the things I've seen here and of the worst atrocities ever witnessed or heard of." Executions follow a regular pattern. The prisoner stands in front of a single revolutionary guard armed with a high velocity rifle. The guard gets three shots to kill him. Then the commander of the squad delivers the coup de gras.

MASSOUD RAJAVI: Look at this picture. This is called (Inaudible). This is for torture. And now it is used very widely all over the prisons. For instance, I was informed some weeks before that in (Inaudible), they arrested one of our Mojahedin brothers. A young man. First they ask him with which hand you distributed these leaflets. He told them, this hand. They cut the right hand. This is exactness. Then they hanged him and after torture, they executed him.

ALI-AKBAR RAFSANJANI: Anyone who uses arms is making war on us. These people collected large quantities of arms. They plundered army bases and garrisons. They stole weapons from the front lines. While we were fighting Iraq, they waged all-out war on us.

NARRATOR: With the support of men like these, the regime may have won its first battle against the armed opposition at home. Whatever suffering the external war with Iraq is causing, it has united the country. That's why some say Khomeini's biggest problem will come with the end of the war.

Meanwhile, in south Tehran, freshly dug graves in the Heaven's Gate Cemetery await the bodies of the martyrs to come.

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***Throughout the program film clips are shown. Occasionally narrator will pause and film clip will continue.